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C O N F I D E N T I A L LILONGWE 000128

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DEPT FOR AF/S - ELIZABETH PELLETREAU, IO/UNP - ERIN MCLINN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [IS](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: MALAWI CITES LACK OF BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH
ISRAEL AS REASON FOR CHANGE IN VOTING

REF: A. PELLETREAU - SULLIVAN EMAIL - 12/20/2007

[1](#)B. 07 LILONGWE 879

Classified By: Political Officer John Letvin for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) On February 13, Foreign Minister Joyce Banda informed the U.S. Embassy that Israel's lack of interest in developing bilateral cooperation with Malawi was the reason for Malawi's change in voting this year in the UN General Assembly regarding three resolutions biased against Israel. In a previous meeting with the Ambassador, FM Banda was not conversant about the resolutions or Malawi's voting history and asked the Ambassador to provide Malawi's recent voting record on the resolutions in question. After the embassy provided Malawi's voting record for the past three years on the resolutions in question, the Foreign Minister responded with the government of Malawi's explanation.

[1](#)2. (C) Emboff also discussed the matter with MFA Director of Political Affairs Paul Chiunguzeni, who commented that Malawi's mission to the U.N. usually abstains from voting on such resolutions unless it is instructed otherwise by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: In the past, the government of Malawi has exhibited poor communication with its mission to the UN, which Chiunguzeni admitted is often forced to abstain or follow the position of other SADC members or the AU in lieu of guidance from Lilongwe. While it is possible that the government of Malawi has made a formal policy shift regarding Israel, it is more likely that Malawi's UN delegation received no formal instructions and decided to follow the crowd in voting.
SULLIVAN